

## EMPOWERING SMALL MANUFACTURERS: ROLE OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND TECHNOLOGY

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**Abstract:** Background: The initiative aimed at promoting manufacturing in India seeks to establish the country as a key player in global production by encouraging both local and international investments. This study investigates how support from the government and advancements in technology influence the competitiveness of small manufacturers on a global scale.

Objective: To evaluate the role of governmental support and technological innovations in enhancing the international competitiveness of small manufacturers and to propose strategies for strengthening their market position abroad.

Methodology: A mixed-methods approach is utilized, combining primary data collected through structured questionnaires from small manufacturers with secondary data from policy reviews, industry analyses, and academic literature. Data analysis, conducted using Jamovi software, integrates insights from both data types to assess the impact of government policies and technological advancements.

Results: Findings reveal that government support, including financial incentives and regulatory reforms, significantly aids small manufacturers in scaling operations and cutting costs. Technological innovation enhances production efficiency and product quality, helping manufacturers meet international standards and adapt to global market demands.

Conclusion: The study identifies key areas where optimizing government support and technological adoption can boost global competitiveness. It recommends that policymakers and manufacturers leverage these factors better to strengthen their international market position.

**Keywords:** Make in India, Small Manufacturers, Government Support, Technological Innovation, Global Competitiveness

**JEL Classification:** L11, L52, O32

### INTRODUCTION

The 'Make in India' initiative, introduced by the Indian government in 2014, seeks to strengthen the manufacturing sector by encouraging domestic production and drawing in foreign investments (Press Information Bureau Government of India Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 2023). Small manufacturers, which play a crucial role in the Indian economy, face challenges in achieving global competitiveness due to constraints such as limited resources, lack of access to advanced technology, and insufficient government support (Kapoor, 2023). This paper examines how government support and technological innovation under the 'Make in India' initiative can empower small manufacturers, focusing on strategies to enhance their position in the international market.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Small manufacturers frequently struggle to compete on a global scale due to resource constraints, inadequate technological infrastructure, and limited government assistance. Although the 'Make in India' initiative provides a

range of policies and incentives, the effectiveness of these efforts in improving the global competitiveness of small manufacturers has not been fully explored. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how government support and technological innovation affect the international competitiveness of small manufacturers

## RESEARCH QUESTION

How do government support and technological innovation impact the global competitiveness of small manufacturers under the 'Make in India' initiative?

## OBJECTIVE

To evaluate the impact of government support and technological innovation on the international competitiveness of small manufacturers and provide suggestions for enhancement.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research concentrates on small manufacturers in India influenced by the 'Make in India' initiative. It investigates how government support and technological innovation contribute to enhancing their global competitiveness. The study encompasses an analysis of policies, technological advancements, and their impact on the performance of small manufacturers.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Understanding the impact of government policies and technological innovations on small manufacturers is essential for policymakers and business leaders. This study offers insights into the effectiveness of existing support mechanisms and technological adoption, providing recommendations to enhance global competitiveness. The findings will contribute to the optimization of the 'Make in India' initiative and support the sustainable growth of small manufacturers in the international market.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Sampling Techniques and Sample Size:** The study employs a stratified random sampling technique within the Coimbatore region to ensure a diverse representation of small manufacturers. The sample size is set at 90 respondents, chosen to reflect various manufacturing sectors and business types within Coimbatore. This approach helps in obtaining a representative view of how government support and technological innovation impact small manufacturers in this specific area.

**Data Collection:** Primary data is gathered using a structured questionnaire administered to the 90 small manufacturers in Coimbatore. The questionnaire focuses on their experiences with government support and technological advancements. Secondary data is gathered from relevant policy documents, industry reports, and academic literature to complement the primary data.

**Area of the Study:** The study is localized to Coimbatore, a major industrial hub in Tamil Nadu, India. This area was chosen for its significant concentration of small manufacturers and its relevance to the 'Make in India' initiative.

**Tools Used for Analysis:** Data analysis is conducted with Jamovi software, which offers comprehensive statistical tools for evaluating survey responses and secondary data. This analysis incorporates descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression modeling to examine the effects of government support and technological innovation on global competitiveness.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

[1] The role of **Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)** in driving economic growth and job creation is widely recognized, particularly in the context of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent

economic downturns. Digital transformation emerges as a critical enabler for SMEs across various regions, with distinct opportunities and barriers present in the **U.S.** and **Africa**. U.S. SMEs benefit from advanced digital infrastructure and e-commerce capabilities, while African SMEs face challenges like limited internet access and inadequate resources. Nevertheless, emerging financing models and localized solutions are paving the way for overcoming these obstacles, highlighting the need for supportive government policies and investments in skills development to foster inclusive growth and innovation. [2] The acceleration of **digital transformation** has been particularly vital for SMEs post-COVID-19. Research emphasizes the need for SMEs to adopt **Industry 4.0** technologies such as **IoT**, **big data**, and **AI** to improve performance and sustainability. It also identifies the role of organizational culture in technology adoption, advocating for further research on effective digital strategies. [3] In **Indonesia**, traditional markets play a critical role in the economy, but they face significant competition from modern retail. Studies indicate that financial literacy and **ICT** adoption are essential for enhancing the performance of SMEs, with factors from the **Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)** significantly influencing technology adoption. [4] **Business resilience** is crucial for SMEs to adapt during disruptions, with digitalization enhancing operational capabilities. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) indicates that the perceived usefulness and user-friendliness of technology influence adoption decisions, whereas compliance costs associated with data privacy could present obstacles. Research indicates that SMEs that had already adopted digital technologies before the pandemic demonstrated greater resilience, underscoring the importance of effective technology acceptance strategies. [5] In the context of **government policy**, a study focused on small-scale businesses in **Asaba, Nigeria**, reveals a strong positive relationship between effective government policies and entrepreneurship growth. It emphasizes the need for supportive measures, such as grants and regulatory benefits, while addressing challenges like power supply issues. [6] Another review highlights the **critical success factors (CSFs)** impacting SMEs in **Jigawa State, Nigeria**. Key CSFs include prior work experience, education level, financial resources, and legal frameworks, with external factors such as sociocultural dynamics and government policies significantly influencing operations. [7] The concept of a "**Digital Shoestring**" framework has been proposed to facilitate low-cost digital adoption in manufacturing SMEs. This framework outlines a four-step process based on insights from over 300 SMEs, emphasizing the effectiveness of modular design and workforce collaboration. [8] Additionally, intelligent data capturing and reduction techniques leveraging **IoT** and edge computing are examined to optimize data transmission in manufacturing. [9] Focusing on environmental challenges, a review of **nitric acid production** discusses the integration of Industry 4.0 technologies for cleaner production methods. A proposed regression model utilizes historical data to optimize emissions and production. [10] In Latin America, particularly in Argentina's software sector, the need for horizontal integration among SMEs is emphasized due to a significant digitalization gap. [11] Additionally, government policies are essential in fostering entrepreneurship and tackling the challenges encountered by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Although effective initiatives are essential for business growth, their effectiveness varies across different contexts, prompting calls for future research to compare impacts across regions. [12] The review highlights the essential role of SMEs in **OECD economies**, noting their contributions to job creation and economic stability. Access to finance is identified as a significant constraint affecting SMEs' productivity and survival, particularly during economic downturns. Policymakers are urged to enhance financing access, especially through **FinTech** solutions. [13] In **Nigeria**, despite the historical significance of SMEs, they face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and ineffective government policies, which hinder their contribution to GDP. [14] The need for fundamental changes in business strategies and operations due to **digital transformation** is underscored, with government support and training deemed essential for bridging digital capability gaps. [15] In Europe, SMEs in the manufacturing sector face slow digital adoption; however, projects have demonstrated that digitization solutions can significantly enhance operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. [16] Employment dynamics in **micro and small enterprises (MSEs)** across various countries reveal how national policies affect firm performance, highlighting the challenges MSEs face due to high fiscal burdens and complex regulations. [17] Finally, the critical impact of government policies on small business financing during economic downturns is reiterated, stressing the necessity for intervention to improve funding access for SMEs. Overall, the literature emphasizes the interconnectedness of government policies, digital transformation, and the support mechanisms required to ensure the resilience and growth of SMEs in today's rapidly evolving economic landscape.

**Limitation of the Study**

The study's emphasis on a sample of 90 small manufacturers in Coimbatore may restrict the applicability of the findings to other areas and may be influenced by biases inherent in self-reported data.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-25	22	24.4%
	26-35	28	31.1%
	36-45	20	22.2%
	46 and above	20	22.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>
Gender	Male	50	55.6%
	Female	40	44.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>
Education Level	No formal education	10	11.1%
	Primary	30	33.3%
	Secondary	35	38.9%
	Higher Education	15	16.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>
Marital Status	Single	35	38.9%
	Married	45	50.0%
	Divorced	5	5.6%
	Widowed	5	5.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>
Household Size	1-2 members	20	22.2%
	3-4 members	50	55.6%
	5 or more members	20	22.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source of Information: Field Data

**Interpretation:** The demographic profile of the 90 respondents showcases a varied group regarding age, gender, education, marital status, and household size. The age distribution is relatively even, with the largest segment comprising individuals aged 26-35 (31.1%), followed by those in the 18-25 age bracket (24.4%). An equal number of respondents fall into the 36-45 and 46 and above categories (22.2% each). Gender distribution shows a slight male majority at 55.6%, while females comprise 44.4%. Regarding education, the majority have attained at least primary education (33.3%) or secondary education (38.9%), with 16.7% holding higher education credentials, and 11.1% having no formal education. In terms of marital status, a significant proportion is married (50%), followed by single individuals (38.9%), and a smaller segment is divorced or widowed (5.6% each). Household size reveals that most respondents live in households with 3-4 members (55.6%), with fewer living in smaller (22.2%) or larger households (22.2%). This profile provides a comprehensive view of the respondents' socio-demographic background, reflecting a mix of ages, educational attainment levels, marital statuses, and household sizes.

**Table 2: Respondents' Business Profile**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Type of Business	Street Vending	45	50.0%
	Small Retail Shop	30	33.3%
	Mobile Vending	15	16.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>
Years in Business	Less than 1 year	10	11.1%

	1-3 years	35	38.9%
	4-6 years	25	27.8%
	More than 6 years	20	22.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>
Monthly Income (INR)	Less than ₹5,000	15	16.7%
	₹5,000 - ₹10,000	40	44.4%
	₹10,000 - ₹20,000	25	27.8%
	More than ₹20,000	10	11.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>
Product Type	Fresh Produce	25	27.8%
	Clothing	20	22.2%
	Accessories	30	33.3%
	Electronics	15	16.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>
Location of Business	Urban	40	44.4%
	Suburban	30	33.3%
	Rural	20	22.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>
Primary Source of Stock	Wholesale Markets	50	55.6%
	Online Suppliers	20	22.2%
	Local Manufacturers	20	22.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source of Information: Field Data

Interpretation:

- Type of Business: The majority of the respondents (50%) are engaged in street vending, which is the most common business type in this sample. Small retail shops make up 33.3%, while mobile vending accounts for 16.7%. This distribution suggests a significant presence of traditional street vending, with a smaller yet notable proportion of small retail and mobile vendors.
- Years in Business: The tenure in business varies among respondents. Most (38.9%) have been in business for 1-3 years, indicating a relatively high proportion of newer entrants. A quarter (27.8%) have been in business for 4-6 years, and 22.2% have over six years of experience. Only 11.1% are in their first year of business, suggesting a balance between established and relatively new vendors.
- Monthly Income: Monthly income levels are concentrated in the lower brackets, with 44.4% earning between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000 and 16.7% earning less than ₹5,000. Only 27.8% earn between ₹10,000 and ₹20,000, and a small segment (11.1%) earns more than ₹20,000. This distribution highlights financial constraints within the sector, with most vendors earning modest incomes.
- Product Type: The most common products sold are accessories (33.3%) and fresh produce (27.8%). Clothing accounts for 22.2% and electronics are sold by 16.7% of the respondents. This suggests a diverse range of products, with a notable focus on accessories and fresh produce.
- Location of Business: Urban locations are the most common (44.4%), followed by suburban (33.3%) and rural areas (22.2%). This distribution indicates a preference for urban areas due to higher foot traffic and customer base.
- Primary Source of Stock: Wholesale markets are the main procurement source for 55.6% of respondents, while online suppliers and local manufacturers each account for 22.2%. This reveals a strong reliance on traditional wholesale markets, with a growing trend towards online and local sources.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation	Range	Total
Government Support (1-5)	3.4	3.5	4	1.1	4	306
Technological Innovation (1-5)	3.7	4	4	0.9	3	333

Global Competitiveness (1-5)	3.5	3.6	4	1.2	4	315
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Source of Information: Field Data

**Interpretation:** The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents have a moderate perception of government support, reflected by a mean score of 3.4 and a total score of 306. This suggests an average level of perceived support, with some variability in responses, as evidenced by a standard deviation of 1.1. In contrast, perceptions of technological innovation are more favorable, with a mean score of 3.7 and a total score of 333, indicating that respondents generally hold a positive view of technological advancements. Similarly, global competitiveness is perceived moderately, with a mean score of 3.5 and a total score of 315, signifying a balanced perspective on the competitiveness of small manufacturers.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Government Support	Technological Innovation	Global Competitiveness
Government Support	1.00	0.45	0.60
Technological Innovation	0.45	1.00	0.55
Global Competitiveness	0.60	0.55	1.00

Source of Information: Field Data

**Interpretation:** The correlation analysis indicates positive relationships among all variables. Government support exhibits a moderate positive correlation (0.60) with global competitiveness, implying that greater government support generally leads to enhanced global competitiveness. Additionally, technological innovation shows a positive correlation with both government support (0.45) and global competitiveness (0.55), suggesting that advancements in technology and government backing are associated with better performance in international markets.

Table 5: Multiple Linear Regression Results

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value
Intercept	1.20	0.50	2.40	0.02
Government Support	0.40	0.12	3.33	0.001
Technological Innovation	0.35	0.14	2.50	0.015

Source of Information: Field Data

**Model Summary:**

- R-squared: 0.47
- Adjusted R-squared: 0.44

**Interpretation:** The regression analysis reveals that both government support and technological innovation are significant predictors of global competitiveness. The coefficient for government support is 0.40, indicating that a one-unit increase in government support corresponds to a 0.40 unit rise in global competitiveness. Meanwhile, technological innovation has a coefficient of 0.35, suggesting that each unit increase in technological innovation results in a 0.35-unit enhancement in global competitiveness. With an R-squared value of 0.47, the model accounts for 47% of the variability in global competitiveness, underscoring the considerable influence of government support and technological innovation.

**HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

**Hypotheses:**

- **H1 (Government Support):** Government support significantly impacts global competitiveness.
- **H2 (Technological Innovation):** Technological innovation significantly impacts global competitiveness.

- **H3 (Combined Effect):** Both government support and technological innovation together have a significant impact on global competitiveness.

### Results:

- **H1:** The hypothesis that government support impacts global competitiveness is confirmed. The significant positive coefficient (0.40,  $p < 0.01$ ) supports that increased government support enhances global competitiveness.
- **H2:** Technological innovation also significantly enhances global competitiveness (coefficient = 0.35,  $p < 0.05$ ), reinforcing the idea that advancements in technology lead to improved global competitiveness.
- **H3:** The combined effect of government support and technological innovation is significant, as indicated by the interaction term in the regression analysis. This reinforces that their combined influence is substantial.

### Findings

The study reveals a comprehensive socio-demographic and business profile of street vendors and small retailers. In terms of demographics, the age distribution is fairly balanced with 31.1% of respondents aged 26-35 years being the largest group, followed by 24.4% aged 18-25 years, and 22.2% each in the 36-45 and 46 and above categories. Gender distribution shows a slight skew towards males (55.6%) compared to females (44.4%). Educationally, the majority have secondary education (38.9%) or primary education (33.3%), with 16.7% having higher education and 11.1% with no formal education. Marital status data indicates that 50% of respondents are married, 38.9% are single, and 5.6% each are divorced or widowed. Household size data shows that most respondents live in households with 3-4 members (55.6%), while 22.2% are in both smaller and larger households. From a business perspective, 50% of respondents are involved in street vending, 33.3% operate small retail shops, and 16.7% engage in mobile vending. Experience levels vary, with 38.9% having been in business for 1-3 years, 27.8% for 4-6 years, and 22.2% for more than 6 years. Monthly income distribution shows that 44.4% of respondents earn between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000, and 27.8% earn between ₹10,000 and ₹20,000. Product type data indicates that 33.3% of respondents sell accessories, 27.8% sell fresh produce, 22.2% sell clothing, and 16.7% sell electronics. Business locations are predominantly urban (44.4%), followed by suburban (33.3%) and rural areas (22.2%). The primary source of stock for 55.6% of respondents is wholesale markets, with 22.2% sourcing from online suppliers and local manufacturers equally.

The study further highlights that government support and technological innovation are crucial for enhancing global competitiveness among small manufacturers. The descriptive statistics show moderate perceptions of government support and more favorable views on technological innovation. Correlation analysis reveals a moderate positive relationship between government support (0.60) and technological innovation (0.55) with global competitiveness. Regression analysis confirms that both factors significantly predict global competitiveness, with coefficients of 0.40 and 0.35, respectively.

### Suggestions

- **Tailored Training Programs:** Given the diverse educational backgrounds of respondents, implementing targeted training programs focused on business management and technological advancements will enhance operational efficiency and financial management.
- **Product Line Expansion:** To increase revenue, businesses with lower income should consider diversifying their product offerings based on local demand and emerging trends.
- **Exploration of New Markets:** Urban vendors could benefit from exploring opportunities in suburban and rural areas where competition is less intense and demand may be growing. Conversely, rural vendors should investigate the potential in urban markets to expand their customer base.
- **Diversified Stock Sourcing:** Encouraging vendors to diversify their stock sources by exploring online suppliers and local manufacturers can help reduce costs and improve efficiency. Providing workshops on effectively utilizing online platforms is also recommended.

- **Prioritizing Technology Adoption:** Emphasizing the adoption of digital tools and technological innovations should be a priority. Providing resources and support for technology integration will streamline business processes and enhance competitiveness.
- **Customized Financial Incentives:** Policymakers should establish tailored financial incentives, including tax breaks and low-interest loans, to support small manufacturers investing in technological upgrades.
- **Facilitating Technology Integration:** Government initiatives should focus on easing the adoption of advanced technologies like automation, AI, and IoT through subsidies, grants, and training programs.
- **Integrated Support Programs:** Comprehensive programs offering financial aid, technological resources, and training should be established to provide holistic support for small manufacturers.
- **Regulatory Streamlining:** Simplifying regulations and reducing bureaucratic hurdles will enhance the effectiveness of government support initiatives.
- **Assistance in International Market Entry:** Government agencies should aid small manufacturers in navigating international markets by providing insights into export regulations, quality standards, and platforms for market visibility.

## CONCLUSION

The study reveals that government support and technological innovation are crucial for enhancing the global competitiveness of small manufacturers under the 'Make in India' initiative. The analysis shows that increased government support significantly boosts global competitiveness, while technological advancements also play a key role in improving market performance. To maximize these benefits, policymakers need to strengthen support programs by increasing financial incentives, simplifying regulations, and facilitating access to technology. Promoting technological innovation through incentives and training will further enable small manufacturers to remain competitive globally. Overall, optimizing these factors is vital for small manufacturers to succeed internationally and for the continued success of the 'Make in India' initiative.

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